

October 2011

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Dear Friends,

The human brain is an amazing instrument. It can play, it can create and it can confound on a daily basis. In one moment, we can recall with exact detail; a smell, an image, a memory from our childhood. And then in the next night's sleep, we randomly dream of searching to locate the classroom from our college or high school days where the final exam is underway. Education and learning, it seems to me, is the tuning of the instrument, and I have long been fascinated by how we learn, how we tune. Research tells us there are many styles of learning and many different kinds of learners. I am an experiential learner, which means that I make meaning from direct experience and learn through reflection on doing. I learn by going to a concert and observing and interacting with the performance environment, as opposed to reading about music from a book. Aristotle once said, "For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them." As I understand the human brain, learning occurs by practicing and by participating. Some people have extraordinary memory skills and excel at rote memory and testing, while others, like me, learn best by experience and "doing".

Ken Robinson, an internationally recognized leader in the development of education, creativity and innovation, writes "There is a paradox. As children, most of us think we are highly creative; as adults, many of us think we are not." And of course, Picasso let us know that, "All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once they grow up." But no matter who says it or how it is said, it is agreed that we have a problem retaining our youthful knack for being artistic or learning to be creative thinkers, creative learners. Being creative or artistic doesn't mean you know how to draw or play an instrument. Being creative is a way of thinking, a way of viewing the world.

Another understanding I have about the amazing human brain is that it has two sides where very different activities and tasks take place. Two personalities in one head, so to speak. The right side of the brain is best at expressive and creative tasks. The left-side of the brain is considered to be adept at tasks that involve logic, language and analytical thinking. So when we talk about how to learn, we must keep these understandings in mind as they relate to teaching our children. Not every child is starting in the same place, and not every child is headed toward the same place. Some need freedom in order to learn. Some need structure. Some need a mix. But all need respect for their individuality, trust in their abilities to succeed, and adults who have the foresight to design experience to bring out individual greatness. When a student finds the way they learn, it can produce a dramatic change in grades, attitude, and self-image. Let's consider this as we move forward in the 21st century classroom. The school day of the future will be unpredictable, inconsistent, and designed to be wildly relevant for the learner, their engagement, and their development.

One parent recently wrote to MAC about our Whole School Arts Education Initiative, "Children need champions outside the home to prepare them for kindergarten, especially when parents are working and struggling to teach skills at home. As a working mother of a preschooler, I am constantly looking for creative ways to get my son's attention. The arts have provided a vehicle for him to recognize letters through visual and theatrical arts, slow down his speech patterns through music and movement, and observe the world around him through literature and storytelling. The prospect of being able to receive early education that "teaches the whole child" excites us."

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Beyond the return of the arts and play to the school day, we need to consider integrated learning as a strategy to reach more students that "teaching to the test" simply overlooks or ignores all together. Our teachers and schools need the arts as a teaching tool and need to know and understand that integrating subjects like math and music makes good sense. Ever wonder why you remember the lyrics to your favorite songs and forget the Declaration of Independence? The same way the old joke goes about the New York cab driver and the tourist looking for Carnegie Hall, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?" asked the tourist. "Practice, practice, practice", replied the cabbie.

My best,
Malcolm

NOMINATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR MISSISSIPPI'S POET LAUREATE

Four Mississippi cultural agencies have been authorized by Governor Haley Barbour and the State of Mississippi to be the selection panel for individuals to be considered as the next Poet Laureate of Mississippi. The Mississippi Arts Commission, the Mississippi Library Commission, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the Mississippi Humanities Council, in partnership with committee members representing the University Press of Mississippi, Jackson State University and others, are seeking nominations now and will provide the Governor with a list of qualified nominees so that he can make an appointment to the position.

The Poet Laureate will serve as the official state poet, creating and reading appropriate poetry upon state occasions and state agency activities and will represent the rich cultural heritage of Mississippi. To find out all of the details on the nomination criteria and for the official nomination form, visit www.arts.state.ms.us or contact Diane Williams, Chair-Poet Laureate Panel at dwilliams@arts.state.ms.us or 601/359-6529. The deadline for nomination submissions is October 28, 2011.

BACK STAGE PASS COORDINATING SUCCESSFUL FESTIVALS & EVENTS *2012 Festival & Event Coordinators Workshop*

The 2012 Festival & Event Coordinators Workshop has a new look and format! MAC is so pleased to not only be partnering with the Mississippi Development Authority on the workshop, but to have Mississippi Main Street join the team! This partnership allows us to bring you an even greater opportunity to learn all of the ins and outs of event planning. The workshop will be held on January 24 & 25, 2012 at the Hollywood Casino in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. There is a \$75 registration fee that includes breakfast, lunch and snacks. The schedule will be announced soon! Register by sending contact information to: denisehalback@msmainstreet.com.



November 1st is the deadline to apply for the next MAC Minigrant. Find out more by visiting the grant section of our website -

<http://www.arts.state.ms.us/grants/index.php>

Calendar of Events

Some Girl(s)

October 12-14, 16, 18-21, 23
7:30pm and 2:00pm
Ford Center, Oxford

Southern Expressions GCWA Author Conference

October 14 & 15
6 P Fri, 8a-6p Sat
IP Biloxi, MS

Historic Rose Hill Cemetery Tour

Saturday, October 15
10 AM and 6 PM
Meridian Mississippi

Meet the Author Brunch

October 16, 2011
9am -11am
IP Ballroom, Biloxi, MS

Loren Niemi Storytelling Workshop

October 16, 2011
1p - 3p
Walter Anderson Museum
of Art, Ocean Springs,
MS

Centric Soul

Sept 16, Oct 21
9:00PM-1:00AM
Hattiesburg, MS

Mississippi International Film Festival

Oct. 21-23
F 10a-Late, Sa 10a-Late,
Su 11
Davis Planetarium,
Jackson, Miss.

Jacktoberfest

October 21, 2011
11am until
Congress Street,
downtown Jackson,
Mississippi

Spirited Columbus - A Ghost Tour

October 28, 2011
6:15pm - 9:00pm
Hitch Lot, 200 2nd Ave.
North, Columbus, MS

MSO Bravo II: Hitchcock at Halloween

October 29, 2011
7:30pm
Thalia Mara Hall,
Jackson, Ms

TEACHING ARTIST WORKSHOP

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2011
HATTIESBURG CULTURAL CENTER

Attention: Musicians, Artists, Writers, Dancers, Storytellers and Performers of all Types! Have you ever thought about teaching elementary or secondary students through your art form? Mississippi's students could benefit greatly from what you know and what you can share with them.

The Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education (MAAE) will host a one-day workshop to introduce artists to essential information needed to work in a Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade school setting. Artists who complete the workshop will have the opportunity to work with a veteran teaching artist to conduct demonstration lessons and/or professional development workshops sponsored by the MAAE. This workshop also fulfills the professional development requirement for re-application to the Teaching Artist Roster of the Mississippi Arts Commission.

Fee - \$35 for members, \$50 for non-members, \$75 workshop/membership special. Registration deadline is November 1, 2011. Visit www.msartsalliance.com/



The Mississippi Arts and Alabama Presenters Network met recently (September 21-24) in Baton Rouge during the SouthArts – Performing Arts Exchange Conference to discuss how both organizations could strengthen their presenting efforts by partnering together to consider block booking touring artists. During the conference, Mississippi presenters agreed to become members of the Arts Consortium of Alabama. The Consortium is a network that promotes and supports the work of arts organizations that present touring artists. The group is open to presenters who are developing their seasons of performances or considering the presentation of an artist or group in Mississippi and Alabama. The group welcomes all presenters (libraries, schools, cultural centers, theaters, performing arts centers and more). Grants are available to presenting organization through SouthArts (www.southarts.org). For more information about the consortium or to join the Mississippi Arts Presenters Network, contact: Diane Williams, Arts Industry Director at the Mississippi Arts Commission - dwilliams@arts.state.ms.us (601) 359-6529. Membership at this time is free.

IN THE MAC GALLERY!

Currently, the MAC gallery on the 11th floor of the Woolfolk State Office Building is featuring the Exhibit of Art and Letters by Women in Prison. Beginning in November, the gallery will feature the works of MAC's 2012 Fellowship recipients. For more information, contact Teresa Haygood at thaygood@arts.state.ms.us



The Mississippi Arts Hour can be heard statewide on Sunday's at 3pm on Mississippi Public Broadcasting's Think Radio. Find the station nearest you by visiting mpbonline.org. The show can also be heard on MAC's website and through Apple's iTunes

Upcoming shows

October 16
Clips from archived shows featuring Delta artist and musician, Duff Dorrough

October 23
MPB's Fall Fundraiser Show

October 30
Diane Williams hosts with potter/clay artist, Rachel Ballentine

A #2 pencil and a dream can take you anywhere.

-Joyce A. Myers

MAC NOW ON YOUTUBE!

Your Mississippi Arts Commission now has a YouTube Channel that features all of the agency's documentary film projects and other videos about our programs. Take a look at <http://www.youtube.com/user/themsartscomm>



MAC's Director of Grants, Larry Morrissey, was recognized recently for serving the State of Mississippi for 13 years! Congratulations Larry!



ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS!

Be sure to register your students to participate in Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest! This program encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance. The deadline to register is November 18th, so to find out all the details including the dates for the regional contests, visit MAC's website at www.arts.state.ms.us and click on the Poetry Out Loud logo

ARTS-RELATED JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Executive Director

Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center for Arts and Education

Proven success in maximizing revenues, fund raising, grant writing, strategic visioning, fiscal responsibility and programmatic creativity is required. Strong experience and knowledge with nonprofit financial accounting required. Proven skill or interest in the arts is mandatory. Ability for self-management with superb communication, facilitation, negotiation, and listening skills also required. Must relate to all stakeholders and provide a team oriented environment. Competitive compensation package.

Please submit resumes to GCArtsED@aol.com.